



St. Thomas Malankara Orthodox Church Of Los Angeles

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Christmas Message:

The celebration of the birth of Christ is observed world over with fervor and gaiety, marked by giving gifts, sharing food and singing carols. . The merry celebration often burry deep the real message of X'mas. Many are under the impression that the drunken revelry and all those things associated with are all the make what X'mas is Christmas is not Xmas can be anything, but Christmas is Christ's Mass, Christ's sacrifice.

The birth of Christ has nothing to do with pomp and show of the present day Xmas celebrations. Christmas brings to our mind the supreme sacrifice of God, an action on the part of God to liberate Man from the clutches of sin, to give him freedom, to restore the peace and happiness that mankind lost when it alienated itself from God. God created Adam and Eve for being in communion with God. But when they committed sin, they got separated from God. God became sad. God, as we know, is both just and love.

So Christmas brought back man his freedom. There is thus reason for the people to be happy. For they are liberated from the slavery of sin. But remember, this freedom has been brought to us through His sacrifice. Without remembering this sense of sacrifice, the celebration of Christmas is meaning less.

Jesus Christ brought freedom to man through His self sacrifice. Today the world is tormented by problems generated by the selfish motives of people. There is no meaning for values. The values mankind built over centuries of struggle has come to a naught by the mad pursuits of man for materialistic pleasure.

May the celebration of Christmas bring to our mind the sacrifice of Jesus for the sake of mankind. May the message of joy through sacrifice inspire all of us to sacrifice ourselves for the benefit of humanity and the greater glory of God.

-----*Vicar Rev. Fr. Yohannan Panicker*

Special Topic

Christmas Prayers

Amidst the giving of gifts, the excitement of children and the cooking of traditional dinners, it is easy to miss "the reason for the season", the birth of God's son, Jesus Christ. There are several ways of bring Jesus back into our family celebrations of Christmas, including church services. Here though, are a number of Christmas prayers for use at various stages of the day - these can be said by the family together, or silently in a moment aside from the rush.

For those who work on Christmas Day :

Lord. As I spend today going about my work, help me to put aside any bitterness that I'm not celebrating at home with loved ones. I ask you, Loving Father. to give me a special



sense of your presence as I meet people, that I may shed on them the light of the Bethlehem Star, the Spirit of Christmas. Amen.

A reflective Christmas prayer :

Father God, When your precious Son became a tiny baby in a stable in Bethlehem in poverty and simplicity, you changed our world. As we imagine those surroundings, we join with the shepherds and the wise men in wonder and praise. We thank you for our material lives, praise you for our spiritual lives, and trust in you for our eternal life. Amen.

At present opening time :

Lord Jesus, Wise men traveled for miles to bring you the first Christmas presents. So may we, too, remember with thankful hearts the love that comes with each present we open. We also thank you for the amazing love you have for each of us, and we thank you for the many gifts that you give us. Amen

At Christmas lunch : (other mealtime prayers)

We thank you, Father God, for the love that binds us, for the food that nourishes us, and for your giving of your Son into our world to save us. Amen.



Some Christmas readings from the Bible:

St Luke 2 : 1-20, - St Luke tells the traditional nativity story.

John 1 : 1-18, - the Prologue to St.John's Gospel reveals how Jesus was destined to be born from the very beginning of time.

1 John 4:7-14 - reminds us of God's love for us in giving His son to be born as a human baby.

Isaiah 9:2,6,7 - the prophet Isaiah foretells the coming of the Prince of Peace.

Children's Corner

A Child of Promise

Who are you little baby? Who are you little Christchild, lying so quietly in manger straw? Who are you that angels should herald your presence and stars announce your birth? That wisemen and shepherds -- the high and the low -- should bow before you? Who are you, child of Bethlehem, son of David? What is your future? What is your promise?

Seven centuries before your birth the ancient Scriptures speak of you....

For to us a child is born,
To us a son is given,
And the government will be
on his shoulders,
And his name will be called
Wonderful Counselor,
Mighty God
Everlasting Father,
Prince of Peace.
Of the increase of his
government and of peace
There will be no end.

Isaiah 9:6-7a



What is this government? What is this peace, O Christmas baby? Are you a warrior-to-be? Are you a king? What promise do you hold?

How can you be the Mighty God while flecks of straw, blown from the stable floor, dot your fine hair? How is this?

How can you be the Everlasting Father while not yet an hour old? How is it?



Memory Verse

Luke 2:1-7

[2:1] In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. [2] (This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria.) [3] And everyone went to his own town to register.

[4] So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. [5] He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. [6] While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, [7] and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.



How can you be a Wonderful Counselor before you've learned? A teacher before you've been taught? What is the wellspring of your wisdom? What is this mystery set before us, enigmatic newborn lying in a stable manger, born of parents poor, yet destined for this greatness? You must be the One we've hoped for, longed for all our lives. The One who will set us free from our depressions and oppressions, within and without.

Little wonder angels cannot contain their Good News of Great Joy. Little wonder heavenly host sing in chorus,

Glory to God in the highest,
and on earth peace to men....**
Luke 2:14

Be my peace, O Prince of Peace. Let its gentle, joyful blanket comfort my nervous soul, and still the warring of your earth.

Be my government, O Christ. Govern not my own heart only, but also this desperate world in which I live.

Be my Everlasting Father and my Counselor. By your counsel guide me out of confusion and turmoil into the sunlight that always shines above my low-lying clouds.

Welcome, Christchild. All my life I have needed you. O Child of Promise, this Christmas morning I give to you my heart. Amen.

Church Column



EACB Message:

The Board would like to thank readers for continuous support and prayers. We had a blessed year behind us to thank God for all good things that happened, and perceive difficult times with courage. Members have always supported our effort to keep newsletter rolling and create community togetherness. This year our focus was prayer and tried to cover a wide range of realistic situation and question we may have in our mind.

This time we would like to remind that no newsletter is complete without its active participation from our members. This is our reflection to the community and should not forget that our thoughts shared would help reach out to one or many.

In coming years we plan to reach out by adding informational articles and create community awareness.

Parents should encourage children to actively involve with EACB activities.

“Christmas time comes
Ones a year,
Its here and then It's gone,
But if you have
Christ in your heart then
Christmas may be long....”

Merry Christmas
&
A Happy New Year 2007

With Warm Whishes
Love and Regards From
EACB

The Orthodox Center



Eldo Lent / Twenty five days lent / Lent of Advent.

It started from sixth century. It is connected with the birth of Christ. Every year it falls between December 1st and 25th. It Ends on Christmas Day.



A Worship in complete Form.

The Five essential parts of a worship namely praise, thanksgiving, repentance, supplication and, dedication are fully assimilated in Holy Qurbana.



Why Is "Silent Night" So Popular?

Why has "Silent Night" become our most beloved carol? Is it the words -- tender, intimate, gentle? Or the tune -- so peaceful, so memorable, so easy to play or pick out with one hand on the piano?

It is not a joyous, fast-paced carol like Handel's "Joy to the World." Nor theologically-rich like Charles Wesley's "Hark, the Herald Angels Sing." Nor does it have a complex tune like "Angels We Have Heard on High."

Rather, "Silent Night" is quiet and reflective, calling us to meditate on the scene. It is the ambience conveyed by both the gentle words and melody that create from this carol an oasis of peace.

"All is calm, all is bright."

It calls us to dwell on the Madonna and Child --

*"Round yon Virgin, mother and Child,
Holy Infant, so tender and mild,
Sleep in heavenly peace."*

You *feel* as the "shepherds quake at the sight." You can *imagine* as "heavenly hosts sing Alleluia." And you begin to sing "Alleluia to the King" right along with them.

Rays of backlit brilliance highlight many a religious painting, but here the picture of light is painted in words:

*"Glories stream from heaven afar...."
"Son of God, love's pure light,
Radiant beams from Thy holy face...."*

Just Who is in this manger? What is the significance of this birth? What is Christmas about -- really? Perhaps most of all, "Silent Night" is beloved because it reminds us in its simple, but exceedingly clear way, the truth behind it all -- the truth that changes everything:

"Christ, the Savior is born!"

Sing it again this Christmas and let its gentle peace wash over you and its bold assertion renew your soul.

"Jesus, Lord, at thy birth!"

"Jesus, Lord, at thy birth!"



Announcements:



* * * Christmas Carol:

- **Dec. 2nd** - Valley area, Glendale, Arcadia, Fontana, Upland, Corona and Diamond Bar areas.
- **Dec. 3rd** - San Diego, Brea, Placentia and South Orange County areas.
- **Dec 9th** - Norwalk, Cerritos, Cypress, Long Beach, Buena Park, Fullerton and Yorba Linda.
- **Dec. 10th** - Culver City, Los Angeles, Santa Monica, Westchester, Harbor City, Hawthorne and Rancho Palos Verdes areas.

Christmas & New Year Schedule:

25th Dec 06: **Christmas Service** at 8:30 AM
Love Feast after the mass

30th Dec 06: *Ecumenical Christmas Program*
Venue: *St. Bernadine of Siena Church*
Auditorium, 24410, Calvert St,
Woodland Hills CA 91367
at 5:00PM

31st Dec 06: *9.00 AM Qurbana (New Year Special)*

Sunday Service:

Namaskaram : 9.00 am – 9.45 am
Holy Qurbana : 9.45 am onwards
English : 1st & 2nd Sunday
Malayalam : 3rd, 4th & 5th Sunday

Sunday School:

Sunday School every Sunday after the Holy Qurbana.

12/03/2006: Sunday School Quiz

12/24/06: Christmas Break (No Class)

Church Events:

Stay tuned for church events every Sunday during the announcements after the Holy Qurbana.

- **Choir Practice on Sunday's After Holy Qurbana.**
- **No Choir Practice in Dec 3rd and 10th 2006**



Prayer Corner

Church Activities:

- **The Martha Mariam Samajam meeting will be held at Church on 2nd Sunday of every month after the Holy Qurbana.**

**Merry
Christmas**



Have any Questions?

OR

**Your comments may be directed to the
Editorial and Communication Board**

Rev. Fr. Yohannan Panicker
Dr. Sheba George, Mr. Thomas Phillip,
Mr. John P. Varghese, Mr. Mathew Varughese,
Mr. Jijo Koshy and Mr. Gigi Kurian